



POLS 173
Fall Semester 2014
Thursday 4:00-6:50 p.m. in Meredith 202
Debra L. DeLaet, Professor and Chair
Department of Politics and International Relations
debra.delat@drake.edu

Office: Meredith 210
Office Hours:
Tuesday 1:15-2:30 p.m.
Thursday 1:15-4:00 p.m.
Friday 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Suffering is not increased by numbers; one body can contain all the suffering the world can feel.

Graham Greene, *THE QUIET AMERICAN* (1955)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The basic thematic focus of this course will be on the tension between sovereignty and human rights in world politics. The international legal principle of sovereignty has been a defining element of international relations for centuries. In contrast, the concept of human rights did not enter popular discourse until after WWII when growing awareness of Nazi atrocities generated unprecedented support for the idea that a state's ability to act with impunity within its borders is limited by the basic human rights of individuals living within the state's territory. Growing support for human rights after WWII was manifested in the UN Charter which mandates that the organization promote universal respect for human rights. However, the UN Charter also enshrines the international legal principle of non-intervention in the jurisdiction of member states. Thus, in spite of an increasingly well-developed human rights regime, state sovereignty remains a fundamental norm shaping world politics. The tension between sovereignty and the promotion and protection of human rights remains one of the primary issues in contemporary world politics. Indeed, human rights issues have been central to many of the top international news stories in recent decades, including humanitarian intervention in Somalia, genocide in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and the Sudan, democratic revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, ongoing political violence in Afghanistan, Syria, and the Ukraine, U.S.-China relations, and "the war on terror", to name only a few. The way in which the international community has responded to each of these examples demonstrates the complex relationship between sovereignty and human rights in world politics. In this course, we will explore many current global problems as we examine the tension between human rights and sovereignty and as we consider the potential for improving the status of global human rights in the 21st century.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Department of Politics and International Relations seeks to induct students into the community of liberally educated individuals who are capable of understanding government and politics in terms of the theories, concepts, and tools of sophisticated political analysis which characterize the discipline of political science. The liberal-arts dimension of our mission stems from our belief that all people are embedded in a political environment which acts upon them in ways they must understand if they are to function effectively as active participants in a democratic society. Our goal, therefore, is not to train professional political scientists, but rather to produce the liberally educated citizen who is fluent in the language of politics and political analysis and thereby has a foundation for both citizenship in a democratic society and successful training in a job, in a graduate school, or in a professional school. Such a person has the capacity to recognize and evaluate assumptions, implications, and causal relationships pertaining to government and politics and, by extension, to other realms of human experience. Go to the home page of the [Department of Politics and International Relations](#) for more information on the basic objectives of the general program and upper-level courses in the department.

Additional course-specific objectives include the following:

1. To explore the philosophical underpinnings of the concept of human rights and various critiques of this concept
2. To understand the potential tension between the protection of state sovereignty and the promotion of human rights
3. To understand the strengths and weaknesses of efforts to promote and protect international human rights by individuals, non-governmental organizations, states, and international organizations
4. To improve written communication skills.
5. To provide students with an opportunity to collaborate with other students and to engage as citizens on important issues involving human rights.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES, AND RESOURCES

1. **Human Rights Priorities Project (60%):** A centerpiece of this course will be a human rights priorities project. The project will consist of two components: a) a paper in which you identify the human rights issue that you believe is the greatest priority in contemporary world politics; and b) in-class deliberations in which we will try to reach consensus on identifying the most important human rights priority in the world today.

a) *Human Rights Priorities Paper (50%):* The primary requirement of this assignment is to write a paper in which you identify the human rights issue that you believe is the greatest priority in contemporary world politics. You need to explain your reasons for identifying the issue you have chosen as the greatest human rights priority. What criteria did you use in determining that a particular human rights problem should take priority over others? To this end, consideration of the ethical foundations and frameworks for human rights that we covered in the first part of the course will be useful. In short, you need to not only identify a human rights priority but also to defend your choice using concrete ethical reasoning. In addition to selecting a human rights priority, you will identify an organization working on your priority that is worthy of funding for its work. This part of the assignment will require you to do background research on human rights organizations as well as investigation into the relative strengths and weaknesses of different types of non-governmental organizations. Thus, a significant portion of your paper involves scholarly research, and you will be graded on the quality of your research. You should also think of this paper as a persuasive essay. Because we will be participating in deliberations in which we try to reach consensus on a single human rights priority, you will be trying to convince other students that the issue you have chosen is the human rights priority we should identify as a class.

These papers should be 15-20 double-spaced pages with standard margins and font. Essays will be graded for content, grammar, and style and are worth 50% of your final course grade, with

points distributed as described below. Grades on late papers will be lowered by 1% of your final course grade per day. I will require students to post your papers on Blackboard and to read the papers of other students. Additional guidelines for this paper are posted on Blackboard.

- 1) Priority Description and Bibliography: 5%
- 2) Outline: 5%
- 3) Draft 1: 5%
- 4) Draft 2: 10%
- 5) Final Paper: 25%

Grades on late assignments will be lowered by 1% point per day. Note: this deduction means 1% point off your final course grade per late day. This late penalty applies to each assignment listed above.

b) *Human Rights Priorities Deliberations* (10%): Throughout the course, we will devote portions of our class sessions to discussion of the human rights priorities identified by students. At the end of the course, we will devote at least two class sessions to deliberations about our human rights priorities and will try to reach consensus on a particular issue/ organization deserving of funding. As noted in the reading and assignment schedule below, students will be required to read drafts of each other's papers in advance of these our deliberations. During our deliberations, students will briefly identify the human rights priority they have selected and will explain their reasoning. We will spend the remainder of the sessions trying to reach consensus on a single human rights priority and an organization working on that priority that would be deserving of funding. I will donate a portion of my royalties from my human rights book to the priority/ organization selected by the class. Assuming we reach agreement, we will make a contribution to the organization receiving the greatest degree of support (at least a two-thirds majority) of the class. (If we are unable to reach agreement, I will make a donation to a human rights organization of my choice.) A failure to attend and participate constructively in these deliberations will result in a significant lowering of your grade on the project. Note: my desire for constructive participation does *not* mean I will discourage disagreement. Students likely will have strong—and differing—opinions about human rights priorities. I want to encourage students to express disagreements and concerns freely, though I expect you to be civil in doing so. Moreover, I want to stress that your grades will not depend on our reaching consensus or a two-thirds majority. Although I sincerely hope we reach an agreement because I would like us to make a contribution as a class, your grades will not be lowered if we fail to reach agreement. Additional guidelines for the deliberations are posted on Blackboard.

2. Engaged Citizen Assignment (40%): The other major component of this course will be the completion of an assignment intended to help students develop skills and dispositions associated with informed and effective civic engagement. Students may choose from several options for the completion of this assignment:

a) *Human Rights Blogs (40%)*: Students who elect this option will be required to write weekly blog entries (of 400-500 words length per entry) throughout the course. Students should use their blogs to reflect on controversial issues raised by the course material, to analyze human rights issues in current events, to engage in advocacy on human rights issues that matter to them, and/ or to raise awareness or funds for our Human Rights Priorities Project (described below.) The grading criteria for the blogging assignment include the quality of writing, effective use of the medium (for example, linking to pertinent video/ audio clips or related news stories), the incorporation of pertinent current events, original ideas, thoughtful reflections, independence of voice, and timely postings. Because I expect you to be able to write fluently and accurately about current events in your human rights blogs, this assignment requires you to keep up with current events. Weekly blog entries are due no later than Friday night at midnight each week. I will grade your blogs three times during the semester, as noted in the reading and assignment schedule below. The focus of your blog may vary from week to week, but during each grading period for the blog, you need to be sure to meet the range of criteria listed above. The first grading period for the blogs will be worth 10% of your final grade, and the second and third grading periods will be worth 15% each for a total of 40%.

This assignment is intended to give students an opportunity to develop skills in a form of public writing that provides an opportunity to reach a wider audience than papers produced strictly for classroom use. In addition, this assignment provides students with an opportunity to work in a medium that they may be likely to use in their personal and professional lives. In this way, the blogging assignment complements the traditional research and writing skills that we also seek to develop in this class via the Human Rights Priorities Papers. A failure to post your weekly blog by the deadline will result in a deduction to your grade on the assignment. Students can use Wordpress, Blogspot, Tumblr, or another blogging platform for their blogs.

b) *Fundraising, Advocacy, or Service Learning Project (40%)*: Students may also choose to engage in a fundraising, advocacy, or service learning project that helps them to develop and practice skills associated with effective and engaged citizenship. Students will develop a project in one of the following areas: 1) students may develop a fundraising project to raise money that they can either donate to the human rights priority/ organization of her choice or to the human rights priority/ organization selected by the class as part of our Human Rights Priorities Project; 2) students may develop a project designed to advocate on behalf of a particular human rights issue or cause and/ or to raise awareness about human rights on campus; or 3) students may choose to participate in a service learning project related to human rights. (For example, students might choose to volunteer with an organization working on human rights issues locally.)

Students who choose one of these options will need to put together a written action plan (4-5 double-spaced pages with standard margins and fonts) and must produce a project with concrete outcomes. At the end of the semester, I also will ask students to write an evaluative essay (8-10 double-spaced pages with standard margins and fonts) describing the nature of their project, the outcomes achieved, a discussion of both successes and challenges encountered in the execution of the project, and reflections on the ways in which the course material connected to their project. Students may choose to work in groups for these projects. In the case of group projects, a working group may submit a single action plan, but individual students will need to write their own essays. In the case of group projects, your grades will be based, in part, on peer evaluations

of your contributions to the group. You will need to complete peer evaluation forms for each member of your group. These forms are available in the Assignments folder on the Blackboard course website. Additional details about this assignment (and its point distribution) will be provided in class.

3. Class Attendance and Participation: Class attendance and participation will not be formally graded. Nevertheless, active student participation is an essential part of this course. I will use class attendance and participation in making judgments about final grades when students are on the border between letter grades. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings in a thoughtful, productive, and civil manner. You should be ready to ask and answer questions on the assigned readings. You need to participate actively in the class, but you should not attempt to dominate class discussion. I expect that students often will disagree with each other and with me. I will encourage an atmosphere in which we are free to challenge and criticize each other's arguments, but I expect all of us to be respectful and civil in our disagreements.

This course will stress active student learning. I expect that your consistent attendance and participation will facilitate your understanding of the course material. Moreover, because you will be required to integrate information from readings, lectures, and classroom discussions in your written assignments, your performance in the course should benefit from consistent attendance and participation.

4. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the act of trying to pass off someone else's ideas, words, thoughts or inventions as one's own. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional, but it is a violation of academic integrity in either case. You must acknowledge your use of other's work when you quote them word for word (you must use quotation marks in the case of direct quotations), paraphrase, borrow ideas, incorporate factual information from someone else's work, or rely on another person's organization of material. You do not need to provide citations for common knowledge, but it is better to err on the side of caution if you have any doubts. If your paper includes uncited information and/or I suspect plagiarism, I will not grade your paper until you provide satisfactory documentation of your sources. If I discover a case of cheating or plagiarism, I will impose the most serious penalty allowed under university regulations and contingent on the nature of the violation. **In cases of egregious plagiarism or cheating, I will give you a failing grade for the course and may recommend additional penalties at the college or university level, including suspension or expulsion.** See the statement on [Academic Honesty and Integrity](#) at the Department of Politics and IR homepage for further details. Also, see me if you still have questions about academic dishonesty.

5. Technology in and out of the Classroom: Phones, tablets, computers and other electronic devices may only be used in the classroom for academic purposes related to the course. If students abuse the privilege of using these devices in the classroom, I will ask you to turn off or disable the wireless function of these electronic devices. If a student's use of electronic devices becomes disruptive to the learning of other students and the student refuses to turn off or disable the device upon request, I reserve the right to ask the student to leave the classroom. Students must turn off and put away any electronic devices during in-class quizzes, exams, or any other assessments unless I explicitly indicate otherwise. Email is the best way to reach me outside of class. I check my email frequently during normal business hours but do not check or respond to

email during classes or meetings. Under normal circumstances, it is reasonable for you to expect me to respond to your email queries within 24 hours on weekdays. If you have an urgent question that you would like me to respond to promptly, you will be more likely to reach me if you send the email prior to the end of the workday at 5 p.m. Although I may try to answer emails sent on the weekend as possible or appropriate, I do not guarantee that I will respond promptly to email sent on the weekends.

6. Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities requiring reasonable academic accommodations should see me during the first weeks of class. We can discuss your needs and, as necessary, work with Student Disability Services, to design appropriate accommodations.

7. Office for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion: Drake University is committed to the prevention of sexual assault and sexual misconduct and to support for victims when it does occur. If you are dealing with the consequences of sexual assault or misconduct, you may consult the [Office for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion](#) for assistance with your options and for potential resources for support. Due to the nature of the material for this course, some topics may serve as triggers for survivors of sexual assault. I will strive to provide appropriate trigger warnings. Students should also feel free to speak with me about exemptions from participation or alternative assignments if material on the syllabus suggests that it might serve as a trigger.

8. Writing Workshop: Students who would like help to improve and develop their writing should consider making an appointment at the Writing Workshop. The workshop offers individualized support from trained student tutors who will work with students on a range of writing issues, including fluency, organization, development, analysis, and argument. Click here to schedule an appointment with the [Writing Workshop](#).

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GRADING SCALE

A 90-100 (Excellent)
B 80-89 (Good)
C 70-79 (Satisfactory)
D 60-69 (Poor)
F 0-59(Failure)

See my statement on Basic Grading Standards in the Assignments folder on the Blackboard course website.

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REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Debra DeLaet, *The Global Struggle for Human Rights: Universal Principles in World Politics* 2d Edition (Cengage Learning, 2014).

2. Additional required readings will be available in three formats: 1) as electronic links directly within the syllabus; 2) as pdf files available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard; and 3) as hard copies to be distributed in class.

3. Your performance on the course assignments be enhanced by your being informed regarding important human rights developments in world politics. Thus, students are encouraged to follow current events at both the domestic and global levels. I will not require you to subscribe to a specific newspaper. However, you should follow current events through the media of your choice. Note: certain choices are likely to be wiser than others. I recommend keeping up with at least one national daily newspaper, such as [*The New York Times*](#) or [*The Christian Science Monitor*](#), which provide far more thorough international and domestic coverage than local dailies. [*Human Rights Quarterly*](#) and [*Human Rights Dialogue*](#) are specialized publications that focus on human rights.

4. Students might also be interested in watching films with human rights themes. A broad catalog of films is available at [Human Rights Watch Film Festival Films](#)

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READING ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHEDULE

PART I Philosophical and Legal Underpinnings of the Concept of Human Rights: In this part of the course, we will attempt to define human rights and will consider problems associated with efforts to reach international consensus on a basic definition. We will explore various moral and philosophical arguments both for and against the concept of human rights. In doing so, we will consider whether human rights standards are and/or should be considered universal or whether different cultural standards or interpretations of human rights are acceptable. Additionally, we will examine how considerations of gender challenge and/or broaden traditional ways of looking at human rights.

8/28 INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

- Assessment Pre-Test
- Go over syllabus
- Film: *Night and Fog*

9/4 THE HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

- DeLaet, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2
- Bass, ["Everybody, Everywhere,"](#) *The New Republic* May 7, 2007

- Skim the [UN Charter](#), the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights](#). Come to class prepared to discuss the following questions: 1) Are human rights a priority in the UN Charter? 2) Under what circumstances may a state legally derogate from human rights norms?
- Forrest D. Colburn and Norman Uphoff, "Common Expository Problems in Students' Papers and Theses," *PS* (April 2012). Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.

9/11 ARE HUMAN RIGHTS UNIVERSAL?

- DeLaet, Chapter 3
- The *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*. Available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- Amartya Sen, "[Human Rights and Asian Values](#)," *The New Republic* July 14, 1997
- In class: [Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story." Video on TED.com](#)
- Discussion of Engaged Citizen Assignments: We will assign groups for students interested in collaborating on this assignment. We will leave time for groups to discuss potential projects, and I also will create Discussion Boards on Blackboard to facilitate group work. I will consult individually for students who plan to work independently on this assignment.

9/18 THE TENSION BETWEEN SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

- DeLaet, Chapters 4, 6
- Read the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights](#).
- Read the [1926 Slavery Convention](#) and the [1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery](#)
- Read the [Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)
- Andrew Sullivan, "[Verschärfte Vernehmung](#)" *The Atlantic* May 29, 2007
- Anthony Grafton, "[Say Anything](#)" *The New Republic* November 5, 2007
- Film: *The Gatekeepers*
- Engaged Citizen Assignment Planning

9/25 PRIORITIES PROJECT PLANNING

- Students will work in their project groups or individually to put together written action plans with identifiable outcomes for their Engaged Citizen Assignment
- **First grading period for students completing the blogging assignment ends this week.**
- **Paper topics and preliminary bibliographies due.**

PART II Human Rights Abuses and State Sovereignty: In this section of the course, we will examine the tension between the protection of state sovereignty and the promotion of human rights by looking at specific cases in which basic human rights are threatened. We also will closely examine important international human rights treaties to consider the gap between rhetoric and reality in international law.

10/2 CASE STUDY: GENOCIDE AND SELF-DETERMINATION

- DeLaet, Chapter 5
- Read the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#)
- [Graeme Wood, "Burma in 2014: A Countryside of Concentration Camps," *The New Republic*, February 3, 2014](#)
- [Richard Just, "The Truth Will Not Set You Free," *The New Republic* August 27, 2008](#)
- Michael Ignatieff, ["The Death that Will Not Die," *The New Republic* October 8, 2007](#)
- **Written action plans due (for students completing the fundraising, advocacy, or service learning project.)**

10/9 CASE STUDY: GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- DeLaet, Chapter 7
- Read the [Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women](#)
- Filomena M. Critelli, "Women's Rights = Human Rights: Pakistani Women Against Gender Violence," *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 37: 2 (June 2010): 135-160. Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- "The Case for the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health to Address Sexual Orientation," *American Journal of Public Health* 102: 7 (July 2012): 1243-1246. Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- Richard A. Shweder, "The Goose and the Gander: the Genital Wars," *Global Discourse* 2013. Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- [The Real Reason Your Circumcised](#)
- [Jeff for Justice Stop Intersex Genital Mutilation - YouTube](#)
- Film: *Calling the Ghosts*
- **Paper outlines due**

10/16 HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES PROJECT PLANNING AND DISCUSSION

- In lieu of class, I will ask students to attend a film and discussion: "A Place at the Table", 7-9 pm Sussman Theater. Reception following. Students who cannot attend this evening event may check out the film from the Reserve Desk at Cowles Library up until a few days before the screening. The film may be checked out for four hours.

PART III The Promotion and Protection of International Human Rights: In this section of the course, we will examine the existing mechanisms for the implementation of human rights by

international organizations, states, and non-governmental organizations. We will discuss the way in which an emphasis on state sovereignty has thus far limited the types of actions that have been taken, especially by international and state actors. We also will explore the potential for improving the status of global human rights in the post-Cold War era.

10/23 PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS FROM THE TOP-DOWN

- DeLaet, Chapter 8
- Jacqueline H.R. DeMeritt, "International Organizations and Government Killing: Does Naming and Shaming Save Lives?" *International Interactions* 38 (5): 2012: 597-621. Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- [Video: The Battle for Syria | Watch FRONTLINE Online | PBS Video](#)
- **Draft 1 of Human Rights Priorities Papers due**

10/30 POST-CONFLICT JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- DeLaet Chapters 9 and 10
- Claude E. Welch, Jr. and Ashley F. Watkins, "Extending Enforcement: the Coalition for the International Criminal Court," *Human Rights Quarterly* 33 (2011): 927-1031. Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- [The Body Counter - By Tina Rosenberg | Foreign Policy](#)
- **Film: *The Legacy of Nuremberg***
- Writing Workshop and feedback on first drafts of papers
- **Second grading period for students completing the blogging assignment ends this week.**

11/6 PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS FROM THE BOTTOM-UP

- DeLaet, Chapter 11
- Gerry Mackie, "Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: a Convention Account," *American Sociological Review* 61: 6 (December 1996): 999-1017. Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- Ylva Hernlund and Bettina Shell-Duncan, "Contingency, Context, and Change: Negotiating Female Genital Cutting in The Gambia and Senegal," *Africa Today* 53: 4 (Summer 2007): 43-57. Article available in the Course Readings folder on Blackboard.
- Mgbako et. al, "Penetrating the Silence in Sierra Leone: a Blueprint for the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 23: 1 (Spring 2010): 111-140.
- [Michael Ignatieff, "How Decency Happens: What the Rescue of the Danish Jews Teaches," *The New Republic*, December 14, 2013](#)
- [Peter Buffett, "The Charitable-Industrial Complex," *The New York Times*, July 26, 2013](#)

11/13 WRITING WORKSHOP AND PROJECT PLANNING

- **Draft 2 of Human Rights Priorities Papers due**

- Come to class prepared to share your work in small groups and to provide constructive feedback on each other's drafts.
- Class time also will be used to work, within groups and in individual consultation with me, on your Engaged Citizen Assignment.

11/20 HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENGAGED CITIZEN

- Blackboard Discussion Board: Read all students' Human Rights Priorities Papers
- Human Rights Priorities Deliberations

11/27 No class, Thanksgiving break.

12/4 HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENGAGED CITIZEN

- DeLaet, Conclusions
- Human Rights Priorities Deliberations
- Assessment Post-test
- Teacher-Course Evaluations

12/11 HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENGAGED CITIZEN

- Final Human Rights Priorities Deliberations if necessary
- **Final grading period for students completing the blogging assignment ends this week.**
- **Engaged Citizen Essay due for students completing the fundraising, advocacy, or service learning assignment.**
- **Final Human Rights Priorities Papers due:** you may bring a hard-copy to class or submit your final copy to the Digital Drop Box no later than midnight tonight.

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